School Improvement Through Data-Driven Decision Making
EDSI 9960

Semester/Year  Summer 2013
Time/Location  Course taught 100% online using CourseDen.
Instructor  Mary Alice Varga
Office Location  143 Education Annex
Office Hours  MW 1:00-3:00pm or by appointment
Online Hours  TR 1:00-4:00pm or by appointment
Telephone  Direct Line: (678) 839-6092
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Email  maryv@westga.edu
Online Support  CourseDen Home Page  
https://westga.view.usg.edu/
CourseDen Help & Troubleshooting  
http://www.westga.edu/~distance/webct1/help
UWG Distance Learning  
http://distance.westga.edu/
UWG On-Line Connection  
http://www.westga.edu/~online/
Distance Learning Library Services  
http://westga.edu/~library/depts/offcampus/
Ingram Library Services  
http://westga.edu/~library/info/library.shtml
University Bookstore  
http://www.bookstore.westga.edu/

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce students to the process of data-driven decision making for school improvement purposes. It focuses on the use of quantitative and qualitative data by P-12 school leaders—as well as leaders in other types of educational settings—to improve student and organizational outcomes. Students will be introduced to this practice through the application of
assessment-based educational research, focusing on how educators can improve classroom practice—as well as school- and district-wide effectiveness—through the application of assessment-based research on teaching and learning. This process includes the effective interpretation and communication of assessment results. Students are guided to develop the practice of gathering and analyzing data in a systematic and continuous manner.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of the College of Education at UWG forms the basis on which programs, courses, experiences, and outcomes are created. With the goal of Developing Exemplary Practitioners, our programs incorporate ten descriptors (knowledgeable, reflective, inquisitive, decisive, adaptive, proactive, leading, collaborative, culturally sensitive, empathetic), clustered into three interrelated and overlapping themes, that demonstrate our commitment to (a) Professional Excellence; (b) Field-Based Inquiry; and (c) the Betterment of Society. These themes and descriptors are integral components of the conceptual framework and provide the basis for developing exemplary practitioners who are prepared to improve schools and communities.

The mission of the College of Education is to provide excellence in the initial and advanced preparation of professionals for a variety of settings, to foster an innovative learning community, and to empower a faculty committed to teaching and the dissemination of knowledge. This course’s objectives, activities, and assignments are related directly to the conceptual framework, as identified below.

APPROACHES TO INSTRUCTION

This course will be delivered approximately 100% online. This requires the online equivalent of 2250 minutes of instruction (seat-time) and an additional 4500 minutes of supporting activities.

As such, you will be required to complete the following online activities during this course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Instructional Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Posts</td>
<td>1000 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio/video Instruction</td>
<td>2250 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Assignments</td>
<td>3500 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, it is anticipated that students will need to work independently for twice the number of minutes listed above to complete the online activities.
COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will:

1. Develop a holistic understanding and expanded perspective of data-driven decision making, allowing for the application of concepts to specific educational settings.
   (Boudett, City, & Murnane, 2005; Creighton, 2007; Kowalski, Lasley, & Mahoney, 2008; Mertler, 2007; Mertler & Zachel, 2006; Conceptual Framework Descriptors: Decisive; Leading; Knowledgeable; Reflective; Core Competencies: 4Ka,b,e,h; 4Da; 5Se,f,g,h,i)

2. Demonstrate understanding of issues related to best practices of sound assessment of teaching and student learning (both teacher-developed and standardized), including the critiquing of assessment tools and practices (e.g., individual and group, formal and informal, diagnostic, formative, and summative).
   (Mertler, 2003; Mertler, 2007; Conceptual Framework Descriptors: Decisive; Leading; Knowledgeable; Reflective; Core Competencies: 3Ka; 3Sa,b,d)

3. Evaluate published research related to the assessment of teaching and learning within specific content areas.
   (McEwan & McEwan, 2003; Mertler, 2012; Conceptual Framework Descriptors: Decisive; Inquisitive; Knowledgeable; Core Competencies: 3Ka; 3Sa,bd; 3Db; 4Sb)

4. Demonstrate understanding of educational research design and statistical concepts.
   (Boudett, City, & Murnane, 2005; Creighton, 2007; Kowalski, Lasley, & Mahoney, 2008; Mertler, 2007; Mertler & Zachel, 2006; Conceptual Framework Descriptors: Decisive; Leading; Knowledgeable; Reflective; Core Competencies: 4Ka,b,e,h; 4Da; 5Se,f,g,h,i)

5. Demonstrate understanding of the process of data-driven instructional decision-making as it relates to the design, implementation, and revision of effective instruction for all students, including the use of statewide assessment tools for the revision of curriculum.
   (Boudett, City, & Murnane, 2005; Creighton, 2007; Kowalski, Lasley, & Mahoney, 2008; Mertler, 2007; Mertler & Zachel, 2006; Streifer, 2002; Conceptual Framework Descriptors: Collaborative; Decisive; Inquisitive; Knowledgeable; Proactive; Core Competencies: 4Ke; 4Sf; 4Da)

6. Apply various protocols for school improvement, including improvement of teaching and learning, curriculum review, professional development, and program evaluation.
   (Bernhardt, 2004; Boudett, City, & Murnane, 2005; Creighton, 2007; Schmoker, 2006; Conceptual Framework Descriptors: Collaborative; Decisive; Leading; Knowledgeable; Proactive; Reflective; Core Competencies: 4Ka,c,d,f,g; 4Sa,h)

7. Synthesize and communicate results of assessments effectively to specific constituents (students, parents/caregivers, colleagues, policymakers, community members).
   (Baccellieri, 2010; DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008; Mertler, 2012; Conceptual Framework Descriptors: Collaborative; Decisive; Leading; Knowledgeable; Proactive; Core Competencies: 4Si; 4Db; 5ka; 5Sa,b,c,d; 5Db,c)
TEXTS, READINGS, INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES, AND REFERENCES

Required Texts:


**Supplemental required readings will be provided by the instructor.**

Required Technology

- Speakers, microphone.
- A computer that meets the following minimum specifications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Computer Type</th>
<th>Operating System</th>
<th>RAM</th>
<th>Processor Speed</th>
<th>Internet Connection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PC Computers</td>
<td>XP, Vista</td>
<td>256 MB</td>
<td>500 MHz Pentium Processor</td>
<td>Broadband Internet connection (DSL/Cable/LAN) for streaming media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAC Computers</td>
<td>Mac OS X or later</td>
<td>256 MB</td>
<td>500MHz G3 processor or better</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Required Instructional Resource: Tk20 Subscription*

These are available at the University Bookstore or at [http://westga.tk20.com/campustoolshighered/start.do](http://westga.tk20.com/campustoolshighered/start.do).
If you have purchased a subscription previously, DO NOT re-subscribe. For more information about this resource, see [http://www.westga.edu/coe/index_550.php](http://www.westga.edu/coe/index_550.php).
For assistance, email tk20@westga.edu.

*You will not be uploading assignments to Tk20 for this course.

Course References:


**Relevant Websites:**

Learning Point Associates: Data Use for School Improvement  

Learning Point Associates: School Turnaround and Transformation (Video)  

Education Week: Making Data Matter (Videos)  

Electronic Learning Assessment Resources: Data-Driven Decision Making  
[http://www.clrn.org/elar/dddm.cfm](http://www.clrn.org/elar/dddm.cfm)

McREL – Sustaining School Improvement: Data-Driven Decision Making  

RAND Education: Making Sense of Data-Driven Decision Making in Education  
ASSIGNMENTS, EVALUATION PROCEDURES, AND GRADING

Assignments

Assignments for the course are listed below and will be described in more detail throughout the semester. All assignments are due on Sundays before midnight (by 11:59pm) Eastern Standard Time on the due date specified in the course schedule.

Assignments must be submitted through CourseDen. Emailed assignments WILL NOT be accepted.

1. **Online Discussions (25 points)**
   Participate in five online scholarly discussions, including an initial post and responses to at least two other posts. Topics and guidelines for discussion will be provided. See complete course schedule for assigned readings and discussions. (Course Objectives 1-6)

2. **Article Critique (10 points)**
   Using a published, peer-reviewed, empirical research article related to teaching, learning, and/or assessment of learning in a particular content area, you will develop a written critique of the article based on knowledge of educational research concepts. Complete guidelines for this assignment are included in the Assignment feature of CourseDen. (Course Objectives 2-3)

3. **DDDM Project: Analysis and Communication of Assessment Data (35 points)**
   You will work with your classmates as a team to analyze two years of existing data for a selected school. Your team will prepare a short paper intended to inform and persuade the school’s leadership team regarding an area that requires attention. In addition, your team will make a brief presentation via Wimba Live Classroom. Complete guidelines for this assignment are included in the Assignment feature of CourseDen. (Course Objectives 1-6)

4. **Statistics Presentation (20 points)**
   Create a presentation demonstrating your understanding of the statistical concepts covered throughout the semester. Guidelines will be provided. (Course Objectives 1, 2, 4, 6)

5. **Final Paper (10 points)**
   Write a final paper reflecting on the nature and purpose of data-driven decision making and its use for improving education at various levels. An outline for the paper will be provided.
Evaluation Procedures

A total of 100 points will be allotted for the course evaluation based on the assignments outlined below. All assignments are due on Sundays before midnight (by 11:59pm) Eastern Standard Time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Discussions (5)</td>
<td>25 (5 each)</td>
<td>June 9, June 16, June 23, July 7, July 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article Critique</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>June 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics Presentation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>July 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDDM Project</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>July 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>July 26</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 70%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Extra Credit

There are two opportunities for extra credit in this course for a total of 5 points. Extra credit points will be offered to students who 1) complete a mid-semester evaluation of the course (2.5 points) and 2) complete the UWG end of semester evaluations (2.5 points). Students will be asked to submit a screenshot of their submission pages to Mary Alice.

CLASS, DEPARTMENT, AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Honesty: All work completed in this course must be original work developed this semester. Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism occurs when a student uses or purchases ghostwritten papers. It also occurs when a student utilizes ideas or information obtained from another person without giving credit to that person. If plagiarism or another act of academic dishonesty occurs, it will be dealt with in accordance with the academic misconduct policy as stated in the latest Student Handbook and the Graduate Catalog.

Attendance: Attendance will include participation in online discussions.

Disability: All students are provided with equal access to classes and materials, regardless of special needs, temporary or permanent disability, special needs related to pregnancy, etc. If you have any special learning needs, particularly (but not limited to) needs defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and require specific accommodations, please do not hesitate to make those known, either yourself or through the Coordinator of Disability Services. Students with documented special needs may expect accommodation in relation to classroom accessibility, modification of testing, special test administration, etc. For more information, please contact Disability Services at the
University of West Georgia: http://www.westga.edu/studentDev/index_8884.php. Any student with a disability documented through Student Services is encouraged to contact the instructor right away so that appropriate accommodations may be arranged. In addition, certain accommodations (which will be discussed in class) are available to all students, within constraints of time and space.

**Late Work:** Assignments submitted after the due date will be penalized twenty-five percent (25%). Failure to submit an assignment will result in a zero grade for the assignment.

**Professional Conduct:** Professionalism is an essential for all graduate students and expected in graduate education. Professional dispositions promote class interaction and facilitate learning. Professional expectations for this course are outlined below:

- Reading all assigned readings and completing all assignments each week.
- Participating and interacting in online discussions to contribute and enhance learning for everyone.
- Treating colleagues and the instructor with respect. This includes respecting differences in opinions that may arise and engaging in professional and respect dialogue.
- Asking questions of colleagues and the instructor; and offering insight and assistance to those with questions.

**Student Email Policy:** University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG email account, which is the official means of communication between the University and student. It is the student’s responsibility to check this email account for important University related information.

*Communication for this course will also occur through CourseDen, the online platform provided for the course. Students are expected to check CourseDen regularly for communication.*

*You are expected to check your CourseDen and UWG email at least once a day Monday thru Friday for course updates and announcements.*
# CLASS OUTLINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Class Topics</th>
<th>Guiding Textbook Chapters</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>June 3-9</td>
<td>Introduction to Data-Driven Decision Making (DDDM)</td>
<td>Chapters 1-2 (BB)</td>
<td>Online Discussion 1 Due June 9</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction to Statistics</td>
<td>Chapters 1-2 (C)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 8 (BB)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>June 10-16</td>
<td>Connecting DDDM with educational research</td>
<td>Chapters 6-8 (BB)</td>
<td>Online Discussion 2 Due June 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction to Research Design</td>
<td>Chapter 6 (C)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>June 17-23</td>
<td>Purposeful data collection, data mining, and data analysis</td>
<td>Chapters 3-5 (BB)</td>
<td>Online Discussion 3 Due June 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Collaboration in DDDM</td>
<td>Chapters 3-5, 7 (C)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Correlations, Regressions, &amp; t-tests</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>June 24-30</td>
<td>DDDM as a process</td>
<td>Chapter 4 (BB)</td>
<td>Article Critique Due June 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ANOVAs</td>
<td>Chapters 8-10 (C)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>July 1-7</td>
<td>Transparency and communication in DDDM</td>
<td>Chapter 5 (BB)</td>
<td>Online Discussion 4 Due July 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chi-Squares</td>
<td>Chapter 11 (C)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>July 8-14</td>
<td>Organizational culture and DDDM</td>
<td>Chapter 12 (C)</td>
<td>Online Discussion 5, Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Qualitative Research</td>
<td></td>
<td>Presentation Due July 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>July 15-21</td>
<td>Action planning (for future cycles of DDDM)</td>
<td>Chapters 9-10 (BB)</td>
<td>DDDM Project Due July 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>July 22-26</td>
<td>Final Papers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Final Papers Due July 26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Required weekly readings and other materials will be posted on CourseDen.